

**PROTECTED LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT****LANDMARK NAME:** Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse**AGENDA ITEM:** B**OWNERS:** City of Houston**HPO FILE NO.:** 18PL163**APPLICANTS:** City of Houston**DATE ACCEPTED:** Dec-28-2015**LOCATION:** 1700 Missouri Street – Cherryhurst**HAHC HEARING:** JULY-25-2018

**SITE INFORMATION:** Lots 1-12, Block 13 of Cherryhurst Subdivision, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a park and a one-story, brick institutional structure. The designation applies only to the clubhouse structure.

**TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED:** Protected Landmark Designation

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY**

The Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse was built in 1939 as a one-story brick building in the Cherryhurst Park, a complete block of public space in the Cherryhurst neighborhood. The building is located on the Missouri Street side. The Cherryhurst neighborhood was originally platted by D.B Cherry and then sold to E.L. Crain in 1921. The park, though platted into 12 lots, has remained an open greenspace since the beginning and has served the community for many years. After the city bought the park space from Crain in 1924, the community established the Cherryhurst Civic Club to organize social events like a popular moving picture night and circus performances and maintain the park grounds.

The Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse is the result of the community needing a larger and more updated space for their purposes and was included in a list of park updates through the Work Projects Administration in 1938. Landscape architects Hare & Hare from Missouri drafted the new plan for the park grounds, showing the building in its current location on the Windsor Street side. Since its dedication in 1939, the park building has undergone little alteration apart from a one-story addition to the Cherryhurst (north) side, and the removal of the original windows in the 1990s. The Clubhouse has continued to serve the Cherryhurst community by hosting events, Civic Club meetings and other programs and is a visual reminder of a national trend of public buildings that were constructed through the WPA program.

The Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse at 1700 Missouri Street meets Criteria 1, 3, and 8 for Landmark Designation and Criteria 1 for Protected Landmark Designation.

**HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE***Cherryhurst*

The original Cherryhurst Neighborhood was established by Dillon Brook Cherry. D. B. Cherry was an entrepreneur who moved to Houston in 1892 to take part in the lucrative cotton industry but would make his fortune as an oil man. Cherry used his wealth to buy real estate in the Houston area. In 1906, D.B. Cherry and H.H. Cherry purchased a parcel of land from Sam Roos. D.B. bought out H. H. Cherry's interest in 1908 and began the process of platting the land that would become Cherryhurst. Cherry began selling lots to developers and individuals. He sold lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 in Block 16, that would become the block where Cherryhurst Park is, to J. Smith in 1916. Cherry

advertised in *The Houston Post* every week attempting to sell lots in Cherryhurst. Cherry sold a few lots; before putting up the remaining 230 lots for sale in 1919. At the turn of the twentieth century most of Houston's residents lived and worked downtown. Cherry gambled, with his purchase of Cherryhurst that, Houstonians would be ready to move west out of downtown to what was then the suburbs. He didn't anticipate the impact on early Houstonians as the city joined the nation's efforts during WWI. The move out of downtown neighborhoods was slow, despite the opening of the Montrose line of the Houston Electric Company streetcar in 1912 that ran between downtown and Montrose with streetcars which previously only ran in the downtown area now crossed through the area with a turnaround in Montrose. Eventually, the ease of transportation around town helped to establish Montrose as a suburban neighborhood where middle income Houstonians could reside but not in time to save Cherry's investment. Cherry cut his losses and sold the remaining lots in 1921 to Edward Lillo Crain for \$94,380.

Crain was born in Longview, Texas. He was a bank clerk who owned a real estate business in 1913 which bought miscellaneous properties in the Montrose area. He became an established home builder with a wide range of styles from small bungalows to giant mansions. In 1917, Crain bought the Williams House Manufacturing Company, which produced small ready to be assembled houses which were delivered to site with pre-cut lumber and material. Crain would take the concept developed by Sears catalogue house sales and the locally owned Williams Company to create a model for development in Houston still followed today. Many of these homes stand today throughout Houston, especially in Crain's developments: Cherryhurst, Pineview Place, Brady Home Addition, . . . Southside Place [Audubon Place and Garden Oaks]. Crain was also a major contributor to the Historic District Norhill in the Houston Heights area.

Crain developed Cherryhurst and occupied the remaining lots with Crain Ready-Made Homes. By 1921, Crain had been manufacturing homes and other buildings and selling them as kits to be installed by his builders or by the property owners. The Cherryhurst plat was an opportunity for Crain to explore an idea he'd been working on for some time. Crain would act as the developer and the builder and use his vertical integration program through Ready-Cut Homes to provide financing for the homeowners. Crain not only designed and developed the properties, he financed them.

The program was so successful, Crain used it to market his subsequent developments as seen in his advertisement for Pineview Place. Several other nearby neighborhoods are occupied with many Crain Ready-Cut Homes and have already been listed as locally designated Historic Districts including: Norhill, Houston Heights, Audubon Place, Courtland Place, Avondale, First Montrose Commons, Woodland Heights and Germantown. There is also at least one suburban cottage in the Montrose area individually listed on the National Register which is a Crain Ready-Cut House, the Stevenson, Joseph R. and Mary M. House (listed in 1996; 96000275) 804 Harold Street, Houston.

Crain's Ready-Cut Company furnished all the construction materials needed including millwork such as window frames, door frames, cabinets and built-in features were pre-cut as well. The Ready-Cut method made the construction process faster and less expensive. The Crain Ready-Cut House Co. Price Catalogue No. 5, 1925, suggests Crain's manufactured homes made it possible for "the most important part in the progress and comfort of mankind [next to education]."

## *Cherryhurst Park and Clubhouse*

Cherryhurst park is a full block but is platted into 12 lots. It's bordered by streets Windsor on the east, Cherryhurst to the north, Ridgewood to the west, and Missouri to the south. Though the park was platted into lots, it seems to have been intentionally left open for greenspace. This could be the influence of D.B. Cherry's wife, acclaimed artist Emma Richardson Cherry, who was a landscape artists and impressionist who appreciated open greenspaces from her travels in Europe. When the parcels were sold to E.L. Crain, he found the park was a good selling point for attracting buyers into the neighborhood.

At that time, there was a small frame building in the center of an empty block, a tennis court, a croquet court, swings, slides and other equipment for the community. The building was used to house equipment to maintain the grounds and had space for activities and classrooms. Crain agreed he would keep the block as a park if the city would agree to buy it. In July of 1923, The Houston Post reported the city had received a petition signed by the Cherryhurst, and neighboring Mandell, Montrose, Lancaster and Hyde Park neighborhoods to buy the property from Crain for \$16,000. This was approximately half the estimated value of the vacant lots. The city passed an ordinance purchasing the park in May of 1924 to prevent the land from being parceled off and sold. The park was bought by the city from Crain in 1924, and the Cherryhurst Park Civic Club began soon after in July of 1930 to address the park's and neighborhood's needs. The civic club started a long tradition of organizing social events and activities for the community, including a circus nights and very popular movie night, in the park.

The 'moving picture shows' continued for several years until in May 1938, the movie nights had become so popular, drawing hundreds to the area, that the Civic Club moved to discontinue movie nights, citing that the 'Moving Picture Shows...are no longer interesting, instructing nor uplifting, but on the contrary are positively demoralizing', 'the crowds assembled are too boisterous on these nights and uncontrollable' and 'half-grown boys, no doubt form a distance, have taken opportunity of these movie nights to violate the properties, drive recklessly through the streets crowded with children, destroy property and ignore the wishes of the community.'

The small house in the center of the park served many purposes over the years and the Civic Club attempted to update and add to it, including buying a piano and stage for the use of the community. However, by 1935, the clubhouse began experiencing growing pains and meeting minutes state that the house is either not meeting current needs, especially for the large crowds that came for the movie nights or needs updated entirely. One letter from the President of the Cherryhurst Civic Club asks the Parks Superintendent if the current building could be reconfigured to convert a lavatory into a tools space for the groundskeeper because the space he is using to store his tools should be used for a combination music and reading room for the children. This request was ultimately granted, and the structure was renovated in 1936 at the expense of the Civic Club. Multiple requests continue through 1937 and 1938 to remodel or move the current building and to update the park with more tennis courts, basketball courts and better lighting at night. At the beginning of 1938, the Civic Club held a meeting to discuss the tentative plan of moving the clubhouse to corner of the park at Kensington and Ridgewood or build a new recreational building to serve the needs of the

community. Finally, a committee of the Civic Club was appointed to discuss getting a new park building on the existing site of the old clubhouse.

In March 1938, 'Miss Gifford of the Recreation Department' presented a tentative draft of the new park and clubhouse to the Civic Club, with the new park building on the same site in the center of the park. And in May 1938, a new club house "to be located on the present site of the house now standing, had been approved by the Park Board, the Recreation Department and now has to be approved by the City Council." As we can see, the new building is not in the center of the park so, this began a power struggle between the Civic Club, the Recreation Department and Hare & Hare. Minutes from the August 2, 1938 Civic Club meeting states that:

'Miss Gifford, of the Recreation Department, told of a visit to our park that morning, August 2, by Miss Fonde, Messrs. Brock and Hare. She told of their plan to construct the new building on the Windsor Street side instead of in the center of the park as was originally planned. Mr. Brace immediately offered the following motion, seconded by Mr. Dorsey: That the Cherryhurst Civic Club has just learned of the recommendation today by Mr. Hare, of Hare & Hare, to change the location of the Cherryhurst park House from the center of the park to the Windsor Street side and we respectfully ask that no plans be made in this connection without the Civic Club being given an opportunity to present its views on the matter. Carried.'

From August until November, several meetings were planned and canceled until finally in November 21, a meeting was set up between the Civic Club committee and Hare & Hare to discuss the move, and then again for the 22<sup>nd</sup> to see the plans. Mr. Hare told the committee that the contract for the park clubhouse had been let with four other buildings (unnamed) and if 'an attempt was made to change the location of the present time it would cause work to be delayed on the entire project, which might result in the buildings not being started in a certain time to be withdrawn.' So, the plan went ahead. This Civic Club committee was disbanded in November 1938 after completing the task of ensuring plans for a new park club house were in the works.

Construction on the new building went quickly after that, though a council resolution was passed in May 1939 to give the contractor, P. Nelson a 78-day extension to finish the park buildings at Cherryhurst and several other locations including Hennessey Park, Proctor Plaza, Elizabeth Baldwin, and Milroy. Then on June 13, 1939, the Cherryhurst Park recreational building was dedicated. A clip from the *Daily Court Review* on June 14, 1939 states: "The new clubhouse... was dedicated Tuesday night when Commissioner J.H. House, acting for the mayor, presented the new building and A.C. Lederer accepted for the Cherryhurst Community. Herbert D. Gray, president of the Cherryhurst Civic club, was in charge of the program. C.L. Brock, park superintendent, accepted the improvements on behalf of his department and Haywood Neims accepted for the recreation commission, if which he is vice chairman."

### *Hare & Hare Landscape Architects*

Hare & Hare was founded in 1910 by the father-and-son team of Sidney J. Hare and S. Herbert Hare, in Kansas City, Missouri. Sidney Hare was a self-taught landscape designer who acquired his skills and knowledge while working for the Kansas City engineer's office and as a cemetery

superintendent. S. Herbert studied landscape planning at Harvard University before returning to Kansas City to join his father's practice. Hare & Hare completed several significant public and private projects in the Kansas City area and throughout the United States. In the early years of the landscape architecture and planning disciplines, the firm was one of several pioneering firms who helped establish the profession of landscape architecture in the United States. The work of the firm ranged from cemeteries and parks (Sidney's specialty) to large-scale planning projects, a specialty of the younger Hare. Notable projects include the Park and Boulevard system and the master plan for the Country Club District in Kansas City, the pre-planned city of Longview, Washington, and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. In 1979, Hare & Hare merged with Ochsner & Associates to form Ochsner Hare & Hare. In 2014, the firm merged with Olsson Associates to become Ochsner Hare & Hare, a Design Studio of Olsson Associates.

### *Work Projects Administration (WPA)*

The Work Projects Administration was originally named the Works Progress Administration when it was established as a national agency on May 6, 1935, by an executive order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Harry Hopkins, who had been chief of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Civil Works Administration during 1933 and 1934, was appointed head of the new WPA, which succeeded these organizations. The name of the agency was changed to Work Projects Administration on July 1, 1939, when it was made a part of the Federal Works Agency, but its continuity was unbroken and the purposes of the WPA remained the same. It was established as a relief measure during the Great Depression and lasted until it was phased out in 1943, after it was rendered unnecessary by increased employment and reduced relief rolls. Prior to the WPA the problems of unemployment in Texas had been faced by Governor Miriam Amanda Ferguson, who issued an executive order establishing the Texas Relief Commission in March 1933. The commission used FERA funds, enabling Texans to participate in various early New Deal programs such as construction and white-collar projects of the Civil Works Administration and the camp programs of the Civilian Conservation Corps. One CWA program, the Public Works of Art Project of 1933–34, employed dozens of Texas artists in the decoration of public buildings, but the program was not administered by the Texas Relief Commission. Due to the PWAP administrative procedures under the United States Treasury Department, payrolls were routed through federal customs officers in the sixteen CWA regions, and expenditures were authorized by the federal government. The FERA, under which these projects had been organized, was discontinued in December 1935. Prior to that, in July 1935, Texas had established an administration in San Antonio, directed by H. P. Drought, to coordinate WPA activities. The WPA functioned in Texas until after unemployment had begun to fall off sharply in 1942. The phaseout was completed in 1943, and the final report of state administrator Drought was written in March of that year.

Under the WPA 600,000 persons in Texas were helped to provide subsistence for themselves and their families. According to its regulations anyone employed by the WPA had to be the economic head of his family and had to be certified as destitute on the rolls of the Texas Relief Commission. People of both sexes and of all races were employed. WPA wages in Texas ranged from forty-five to seventy-five dollars per month. Peak employment under the Texas WPA program was 120,000 persons in February 1936. This figure perhaps reflects the level of administrative efficiency at that time rather than the need for employment, since the peak caseload of the relief commission came later, in February 1939, when 218,291 of the unemployed were on relief rolls. Soon after that time, in September 1939, the name of the state relief organization was changed by legislative act to the State Department of Public Welfare. State WPA administrator Drought blamed the increase in caseload in 1939 on widespread crop failure in Texas in that year. The caseload remained high from 1939 through 1942, always staying between 120,000 and 150,000, while the number of workers employed by the WPA was never more than half of

the caseload figure. The biggest drop in caseload in Texas did not come until the period February-October 1942, when a reduction of 75 percent occurred, with a proportional drop in WPA employment. The major reason for a worker's leaving WPA relief employment was that he found other work, although some were forced off by lack of project funds. The 1942 drop in Texas WPA employment was undoubtedly due to the increase of business activity following United States entry into World War II.

The greatest single area of WPA public spending in Texas was construction. As in most of the other WPA projects in Texas, one-fourth of the construction costs had to be provided by sponsors. This was a regulation imposed by the Texas WPA administrators, there being no federal requirement for matching monies. Construction projects included parks, swimming pools, highways, bridges, stadiums, and other public buildings. Recreational facilities were increased, but recreational leadership and organizational help were also boosted under the WPA. An attempt was made to provide leisure-time activities for persons of all ages, races, and economic groups during all seasons of the year. The WPA in Texas built and organized pre-school play centers, playgrounds, community recreation centers, toy loan centers, athletic leagues, boys' clubs, girls' clubs, and, during the period of World War II, centers for all branches of armed forces personnel. All recreational programs were begun with the idea of establishing permanent facilities.

The Houston Field office of the WPA had spent more than 15 million across 21 counties in three years. The administration officer, Colonel John S Bonner had produced 779 completed projects ranging from construction of roads, schools and parks to the production of clothing for distribution to the destitute. In April 1939, the WPA employed over 12,900 men and women with 4,900 of them in Harris County. The construction work provided employment for the largest number of WPA workers, around 2,600 in 1939. Other WPA projects include: landscaping of the John Reagan High School campus; Florence Crittenden Home for unmarried mothers; Memorial Park golf club house and; Recreation club house at Studewood Park.

## **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY**

The Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse is a one-story, three-part, painted brick structure that was constructed in 1939. The original building is two rectangular sections, situated north-south, with the larger section to the north with a hipped roof and shed dormer on the southern section. The south façade of the smaller rectangular section consists of two 6/6 windows flanking a pedestrian door. The side elevations of this smaller section have projecting walls that each contain one 6-lite window before connecting to the larger central rectangular piece. Two courses of brick headers wrap around this section, the lower band wrapping around all three sections.

The central section is the larger original rectangular piece and contains two projecting bays on the east side and three projecting bays on the west side. Three 12-lite windows are on the east side, with the outer two in the projecting bays. Three pedestrian doors are situated in the three projecting bays on the west side. The central door is flanked by two 8-lite windows. A band of 'sailor' oriented bricks wrap around both sides above the window headers.

The northern section is a 1990s addition that mimics the original southern section with the same roof and dormer, windows and brick pattern, however, the walls on the east side do not project. The 1990s alteration also replaced the windows and installed a copper roof.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Houston Magazine, v 10 #1 (Feb)1939-v1 0 #12 (Jan) 1940. April 1939, "\$15,000,000 spent by W.P.A", pg. 6-8. Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

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*The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Lorelei Willett, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.*

## APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

### Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA	S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
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# CITY OF HOUSTON

## Archaeological & Historical Commission

## Planning and Development Department

- ☐ ☒ (4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;
- ☐ ☒ (5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;
- ☐ ☒ (6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;
- ☐ ☒ (7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;
- ☒ ☐ (8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.
- AND**
- ☐ ☒ (9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).

### Sec. 33-229. Criteria for protected landmark designation

- | <b>S</b>                            | <b>NA</b>                           | <b>S - satisfies</b> | <b>D - does not satisfy</b> | <b>NA - not applicable</b> |
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- (1) Meets at least three of the criteria for designation in section 33-224 of this Code;
- (2) Was constructed more than 100 years before application for designation was received by the director;
- (3) Is listed individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; or
- (4) Is recognized by the State of Texas as a Recorded State Historical Landmark.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse at 1700 Missouri Street.

### HAHC RECOMMENDATION

The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommended to City Council the Protected Landmark Designation of the Cherryhurst Park Clubhouse at 1700 Missouri Street.



## EXHIBIT A

### PHOTO

#### CHERRYHURST PARK CLUBHOUSE 1700 MISSOURI STREET



**EXHIBIT B**  
**SITE MAP**  
CHERRYHURST PARK CLUBHOUSE  
1700 MISSOURI STREET



**EXHIBIT C**  
**HARE & HARE SITE PLAN, AUGUST 1940**  
**CHERRYHURST PARK CLUBHOUSE**  
**1700 MISSOURI STREET**

